Sitka Church Bldg.

Sitka, Alaska
October 5, 1939

rec'd 10/23/39

Dr. Everrett B. King
Board of National Missions
156 Fifth Ave.,
New York City

Dear Dr. King :

For some time in the past, the Session, Members of the Building and Plans Committees, and members of the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka have been thinking, praying, planning, and working on a project to build a new church at Sitka.

After much consideration the Plans and Building Committees worked out a set of plans (with Earl N. Dugan of Tacoma, Washington, architect). We have recently requested Mr. Dugan to forward a set of these plans to you for your consideration and approval. It is likely that the final drawing will vary slightly from the present set, however, we believe that they will fit into our situation very well.

The present church building is now quite inadequate, having no facilities other than the auditorium. The building is likely to be condemned by the city for the reason that it is old and not considered safe to withstand severe winds that it is subjected to in this locality. The Trustees do not feel that proper repairs can be made for the reason that adequate repairs and alterations would be very expensive.

The Session and Members of the Church are unanimous in their belief that the present church site is the proper location for the proposed new church. This site is far superior to any possible site in Sitka, in fact we know of no other place that would be at all suitable that could be secured.

The Committees and Church members have raised approximately $4,000 for the building fund. It is the present plan of the Committee to begin construction this fiscal year, that:

Much of the required capital will be in the nature of services (rock work, mill, carpenter)

The Church project can be undertaken in units. The basement and foundation is proposed by the Plans Committee for the first unit. Stringers, and frame work of building as the second, undertaking a unit each year.

The Sheldon Jackson Saw Mill is capable of cutting the desired lumber.

Pledges in the form of labor to be accepted for those without cash.

Materials salvaged from the present building to be used in the new.

Increased interest and enthusiasm will result when work actually starts.

It is the hope of this Committee that the Board of National Missions will render all possible financial aid in order to provide a suitable place of worship for the Sitka people. And we would further request your approval of the present church site for the new building. ???

Very sincerely yours,

Raymond L. Wolfe
Sec. Plans and Building Committees

Sitka Church Bldg.

825 W.R.Rust Bldg.
Tacoma, Washington
10 - 23 - 89

Dr. Everrett B.King
Board of National Missioms
156 Fifth Ave.
New York City.

Dear Sir:

Mr. Raymond L. Wolfe, Sect. of the Building Committee of the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska has requested that a set of the study plans for their proposed building be sent to you.

Since I am a little in doubt as to just which scheme they want sent I am enclosing pencil tracings of scheme (A). I am quite certain however that the set of blue prints, sheets 1to 6 inclusive is the one they had in mind.

Very truly yours

Earl N.Dugan

Sutton, Whitney &Dugan
A r c h i t e c t s

REGISTERED ARCHITECTS SUTTON & WHITNEY TACOMA 1919 EARL N. DUGAN STATE OF WASHINGTON

Sitka Church Plaza

Board of National Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the
United States of America
156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

October 30, 1939

MEMORANDUM FROM Miss Voss
TO Dr. King

I have just had a note from Mr. W. Leslie Yaw, the Superintendent of our Sheldon Jackson School at Sitka, Alaska, relative to the imperative need of a new church edifice. You will, I know, find much correspondence in your files relative to this building. It would be much easier to talk with you of my observations in Sitka last summer and attempts at a solution on my return, but in order that you may have the material before you in concrete form I shall attempt to put it in writing instead.

For some time Dr. Somerndike, the secretaries in this office, the minister at Sitka, and the school group have felt strongly that one church in Sitka was sufficient and that both whites and Indians should worship together. This is now done in the old, dilapidated church building on the campus, and I think done very successfully under the guidance of Mr. Webster and the impetus of a large white staff at the school. The building, however, is about to be condemned and is not worth the expenditure of any large amount for repairs.

Naturally the church officers and presbytery do not wish to buy property for the new church when Board property appears available on the school campus. Consequently the recommendation from Alaska was, I believe, unanimous that the new church should be erected on the Sheldon Jackson School campus. Neither Dr. Somerndike nor any secretary in this Unit approves this arrangement for many reasons. This should not be a school church and not dominated, as it most assuredly will be if on the campus, by the school. Our young people should not look upon the church as a school activity as they do now, but should learn to feel that it is an activity of the community in which they have a responsibility. Another point is that while the present pastor and the present administrator of the school work together most harmoniously, this may not be true with succeeding pastors and school administrators, and we would, therefore, be letting ourselves in for all sorts of complications, misunderstandings and disagreements within the church under future administrations. As over against this argument there is the very practical one of a shortage of property in Sitka at this time due to the boom in the town due in turn largely to Government naval activity there.

Now just a short distance from the school toward the town, ideally located on the beach facing the sea is the little Episcopal church, "St. Peter's-by-the-Sea", a little gem of a building, too small for our purpose as a church, but with possibilities of attractive enlargement. Just back of this

is a large, well built, but at present, shabby, manse in which a missionary and her companion live. Mrs. Molineux is either very near or past retirement age; she is not well, and she told me herself that she had been begging her board to allow her to retire for a number of years. She conducts a small Sunday school, but seldom visits in the community now, although she does dispense clothing received for that purpose. I think there is no church organization, at least there are no services held. The purchase from the Episcopalians of this property or some exchange of work would give us Presbyterians an ideal location for the new church and a well equipped plant at much lower cost than that of an entirely new building. As the present manse would serve the school excellently as a practice cottage, I feel sure a satisfactory financial arrangement between our two Units could be worked out for an exchange.

The difficulty lies with the insistence of Bishop Rowe of Alaska, now quite old, but how near retirement I do not know, who built "St. Peter's-by-the-Sea" that he will never turn it over to the Presbyterians because a number of years ago in erecting a church for whites down town they failed to cooperate with him. Dr. Somerndike approached someone in the board here at headquarters and received this reply. I have a feeling, however, that if pressure were brought to bear, especially in view of all of this talk of union, and brought to bear probably by Dr. Morse, something might be done. In any case I should hate to see the Presbyterians erect a second church until every possible stone had been turned to make a combination or a deal with the Episcopalians.

I shall be very glad to fill in any gaps in the above if you care to have me do so either now or just before you make your trip to Alaska.

Edna R. Voss

ERV:J

November 4, 1939

Mr. Earl N. Dugan
Sutton, Whitney & Dugan Architects
825 W. R. Rust Building
Tacoma, Washington

Dear Mr. Dugan:

Thank you for sending to me the proposed building plans for the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska. I am studying these plans with a great deal of interest. From all reports that I have been able to gather, there is a real need for a new building in this place.

I trust that in the near future these plans may be made to materialize.

Sincerely yours,

EBK:TTL

Air Mail

November 4, 1939

Mr. Raymond L. Wolfe
First Presbyterian Church
Sitka, Alaska

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

Thank you for your letter of October fifth. I am studying the plans for the new Sitka Presbyterian Church. I am not yet ready to make any definite statement as to the site for the new building.

I plan now to be in Alaska during the month of April. It may be wise to postpone some of these decisions until that time.

Sincerely yours,

EBK:TTL

February 5, 1941

Rev. Mr. Willis Booth
Sitka, Alaska

Dear Willis:

I have been looking around in the financial department of our Board trying to find some help for you relative to the building of a new church in Sitka. I believe, at least I am encouraged to believe, that we can find about $10,000. in the form of a grant and a loan without interest. Please, therefore, send me some definite figures concerning the building program, stating the amount of money and materials that your church can raise. Give the total cost of construction and the location for the new building.

In order to secure the grant and loan it will be necessary for the Sitka Church to hold the property. Therefore, I suggest that, first of all, you have the trustees and elders recommend to the congregation, at a duly called congregational meeting, that the church accept title to the Sitka property in case the Board of National Missions will deed the property to you in fee simple. Before anything else can be done this action will have to be taken. Regardless of whether or not a building program can be entered into in the near future it seems to me it would be wise to get me this action and let me have it to present to the meeting of the Board in April.

Cordially yours,

EBK:B

ALASKA

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska, through its Elders, Trustees, Building and Plans Committees, and members of the congregation, have been working on plans for the construction of a new church building on the present church site since the year 1935, and

WHEREAS, on December 1, 1939, the session of said church at its regular meeting, approved through motion a request to the Board of National Missions that a deed be granted to the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska, passing title to the present church site, such deed to contain a reversionary clause that in the event said tract is no longer used for church purposes by the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska, title shall revert to the Board of National Missions, and,

WHEREAS, on February 5, 1941, in a letter addressed to Rev. Willis R. Booth, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska from Dr. Everett B. King, Secretary Department of Missionary Operation of the Board of National Missions, it was requested that the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska take action through a duly called congregational meeting to accept title to said site, and

WHEREAS, for identification of said site or tract, a sketch of same is hereby attached and made a part of this Resolution, showing the measurements and location,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska, duly called and convened on this 23d day of March, 1941 does hereby request and petition the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, to transfer by deed, with the above stated reversionary clause, title to said site or tract as described in the attached sketch, to the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska.

Willis R. Booth
(Moderator)

I, the undersigned Clerk of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska, hereby certify that at the Congregational Meeting held on March 23, 1941, a motion was made and carried by a vote of 49 for and 0 against, there being 54 members in attendance.

Approved 4/21/41 D.N.T.

Dated this 24 day of March, 1941

Roland B. Hunter
(Clerk of Session)

First Presbyterian Church

Sitka, Alaska

April 7, 1941

Willis R. Booth
Minister

Roland B. Wurster
Clerk of Session

Rev. Everett B. King, D. D.
Board of National Missions
156 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.

My dear Everett:

Here is the petition of this Church for the title to the Church property in Stika. I am sorry for its delay, but it was left with the Clerk of the Session to send to you when I left for the meeting of Presbytery. I discovered upon my return it had not been mailed.

We are having difficulty getting a plat of the property made, and as soon as it is made I will send it to you.

The cost of the Church cannot be determined until suitable pland have been drawn and accepted. We are working on this now.

I hope this petition reaches you in time for the meeting of the Board of National Missions.

Rev. Paul Whiteside was elected Moderator of Presbytery. I was elected a member of the Committee on National Missions for three years, and Mr. Bromley was elected chairman.

Cordially yours,

Willis R. Booth

copy for Dr. King

April 21, 1941

Memorandum to Miss Voss
from Mr. Tribus
Re: Sitka, First, Alaska

I am attaching a memorandum which I received from Dr. King, together with a resolution attached prepared by the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka.

If you approve of the attached resolution, together with the following addition:

"Recommend: that the proper officers of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America be, and they are hereby, authorized to execute a deed of conveyance to the following described property to the First Presbyterian Church of Sitka, Alaska, a corporation:

(description to be provided)

will you kindly arrange to have the same presented to the Board for action? If I can be of any further assistance, I shall be happy to cooperate.

L. H. Tribus

L. H. Tribus

T:H
Att.

ALASKA

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1201

SYMBOLS

DL = Day Letter
NT = Overnight Telegram
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

R. B. WHITE, PRESIDENT
NEWCOMB CARLTON, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

EAA4 49 NL=SITKA ALASKA 26

EVERETT B KING=BOARD OF NATIONAL MISSIONS 1941 APR 27 AM 4 35
156 FIFTH AVE NYK=

BUILDING COMMITTEE REQUESTS YOUR APPRISAL AND CRITICISM OF CHURCH BUILDING PLANS SIX BLUE PRINTS OF PLAN A WHICH WERE MAILED YOUR OFFICE BY DUGAN ARCHITECT FROM TACOMA STOP REFERENCE OUR LETTER TO YOU DATED OCTOBER FIVE NINETEEN THIRTY NINE STOP WOULD LIKE TO DECIDE UPON SUITABLE CHURCH PLAN SOON=

:RAYMOND L WOLFE.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

April 28, 1941

Mr. Raymond L. Wolfe
Sitka
Alaska

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

Your telegram of April 27th received this morning in which you indicate that plans are being sent to us for approval. I am sorry to have to report to you that there was a delay and the Board did not take action on your request to transfer property in fee title to the Trustees. I am hopeful that this transfer can be made soon. Until that time we will have to continue to mark time.

Cordially yours,

EBK:B

ALASKA

First Presbyterian Church

Sitka, Alaska

May 7, 1941.

Willis R. Booth
Minister

Roland B. Wurster
Clerk of Session

Rev. Everett B. King, D. D.
Board of National Missions
156 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.

My dear Everett:

I have your letter of April 23 and have noted with deep concern its contents.

I have just attended a meeting of the Sitka Chamber of Commerce at which the Reverend Mr. Dowler, pastor of the new Lutheran Church presented the plans for their new building. The Lutherans are in the process of perfecting their organization, the constitution has been read to the congregation, and now every thing is ready for actual work.

Mr. Dowler stated the National Board of Missions of their Church has approved the plans for building, which plans were drawn by Mr. Foss of Juneau. He stated further the cost would be $35,000. and that the Mission Board has the money ready. He stated further that in the near future the citizens of Sitka willl be asked to contribute to the building fund and after the Building has been erected, the public will not be asked to contribute further. Mr. Dowler told me the Lutheran policy is for the local community to raise ten per cent of the cost of the building.

The building will be 68' x 32', and will have an auditorium capacity of 250. There will be a full size basement which will have what he is calling a SEAMEN'S RECREATION ROOM with the provisions made for showers, lockers, play room, reading room, and loafing room. Behind this, separated by folding doors, will be a young people's recreation room equipped with every thing for young people's amusement. Of course the house for the minister will be attached to the rear of the building.

The plans further call for a store room, or rooms, to be built on the front of the lot for purposes of renting as a source of revenue.

I am rather inclined to believe Mr. Dowler will find the estimate of cost somewhat low for Sitka rates of prices.

All this has a direct bearing on our situation. Several years ago our Church felt the need for a new building, and plans were launched immediately. The damper was closed on the project when the Board of National Missions failed for their own reasons to give the "GO" sign. This congregation has raised $4200.

Recently, you gave us definite encouragement when you suggested that this Church petition the Board of National Missions for the transfer of the title of the property to this Church. This petition was made and my people again had their hopes raised.

The need for a building was emphasized when the property was appraised during the winter, and the report on the Church Building was "No value, should be condemned and razed immediately." This report was sent to you.

Now the wheels have ceased to turn. The reason -- "Miss Voss did not deem it wise to carry through the recommendation at this time." I do not doubt Miss Voss has a good reason, but in the face of religious activities in Sitka, I just wonder if any reason is good enough to stand in the way at this time.

Mr. Bowler announces to this community the Lutheran Board is pledged to see their project through immediately at any cost. The Presbyterian Board of National Missions says,"NOT YET". This makes it exceedingly difficult for me to stir up any enthusiasm for a reasonable and adequate Building on the part of my people. It is perfectly evident the Presbyterian Church will not attract people with the present delapidated building, with a furnace that is about worn out.

So far, we have had only one request for a transfer of Church membership, and that from a woman who is entirely inactive, and who wrote the Session, "I joined the Church there after informing Mr. Webster very pointedly that when there was a Church in Sitka (a Protestant Church) that was conducted entirely for the white people of the town, I would withdraw and enter that Church." She is no loss to us.

The Lutheran Church widens the breach between the white people and the native. They will have only white people in their organization.

I do hope you will put all the pressure possible on the Board of National Missions for immediate action before it is too late.

At a recent meeting of the Building Committee of this Church Mr. Stuart resigned as chairman, and I was elected in his place. And of course I was made a member of the Church Plans Committee. Mr. Raymond Wolfe was instructed to wire you for the Boards reaction and suggestions on the Building Plans submitted over a year ago, and to which that had been no response.

The need here is imperative! The work is crippled! The present will tell in the future! Can the Board of National Missions afford not to act NOW?

With every prayer for your success, I am

Cordially yours,

Willis

Willis R. Booth.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
FIELD SERVICE

Sitka, Alaska
May 9, 1941

Dr. Everett B. King
Board of National Missions
156 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Dear Dr. King:

Your letter of April 28th was received and I note that my wire led you to believe that we were forwarding church plans. My letter to you dated October 5, 1939 stated that we had requested Mr. Dugan, architect of Tacoma, Washington, to forward a set of plans, duplicates of those now in our possession, to your office in New York.

Mr. Yaw told us in a recent meeting that he had received the impression from you that you were not satisfied with the plans as presented. From this we inferred that you had received them, however, if you find that they have not been received please advise and we will request Mr. Dugan to forward a duplicate set. We feel that we should make a definite decision regarding appropriate building plans as soon as possible.

We shall appreciate any suggestions, alterations, or changes that you recommend.

Very sincerely yours,

Raymond L. Wolfe
Principal

Board of National Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the
United States of America
156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

May 15, 1941

My dear Dr. King:

I shall not be attending the meeting of the National Staff in Chicago since important problems in Cuba and Puerto Rico make it necessary for me to leave for the South the end of this week. I shall hold your memorandum of May 13 with Mr. Willis Booth's letter to you of May 7 relative to the immediate need of a new church building at Sitka until my return the first part of June if this is all right with you.

I certainly do not want to stand in the way of the progress of our church in Sitka, especially at such a critical time as this, but I do think we make many mistakes in our Board because we rush ahead with some plan on the strong appeal of a man like Mr. Booth or on some emergency, finding out later that a little more long range planning would have better contributed to the real need. I suggest that you and I talk this situation over with Dr. Morse early in June.

Very sincerely yours

Edna R. Voss

Edna R. Voss, Secretary
Unit of Educational and
Medical Work

Dr. E. B. King
Presbyterian Theological Seminary
2330 North Halsted Street
Chicago, Illinois
ERV:J

ALASKA

May 20, 1941

Mr. Raymond L. Wolfe
Sitka, Alaska

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

Your letter of May 9th about the plans for the church in Sitka has reached the office during Dr. King's absence in attendance at General Assembly. We shall see that this is brought to his attention upon his return the latter part of the month and you will hear from him in the near future, I am sure.

Cordially yours,

Secretary to Dr. King

(B)

ALASKA

June 2, 1941

Mr. Raymond L. Wolfe
U. S. Department of the Interior
Office of Indian Affairs
Sitka, Alaska

Dear Mr. Wolfe:

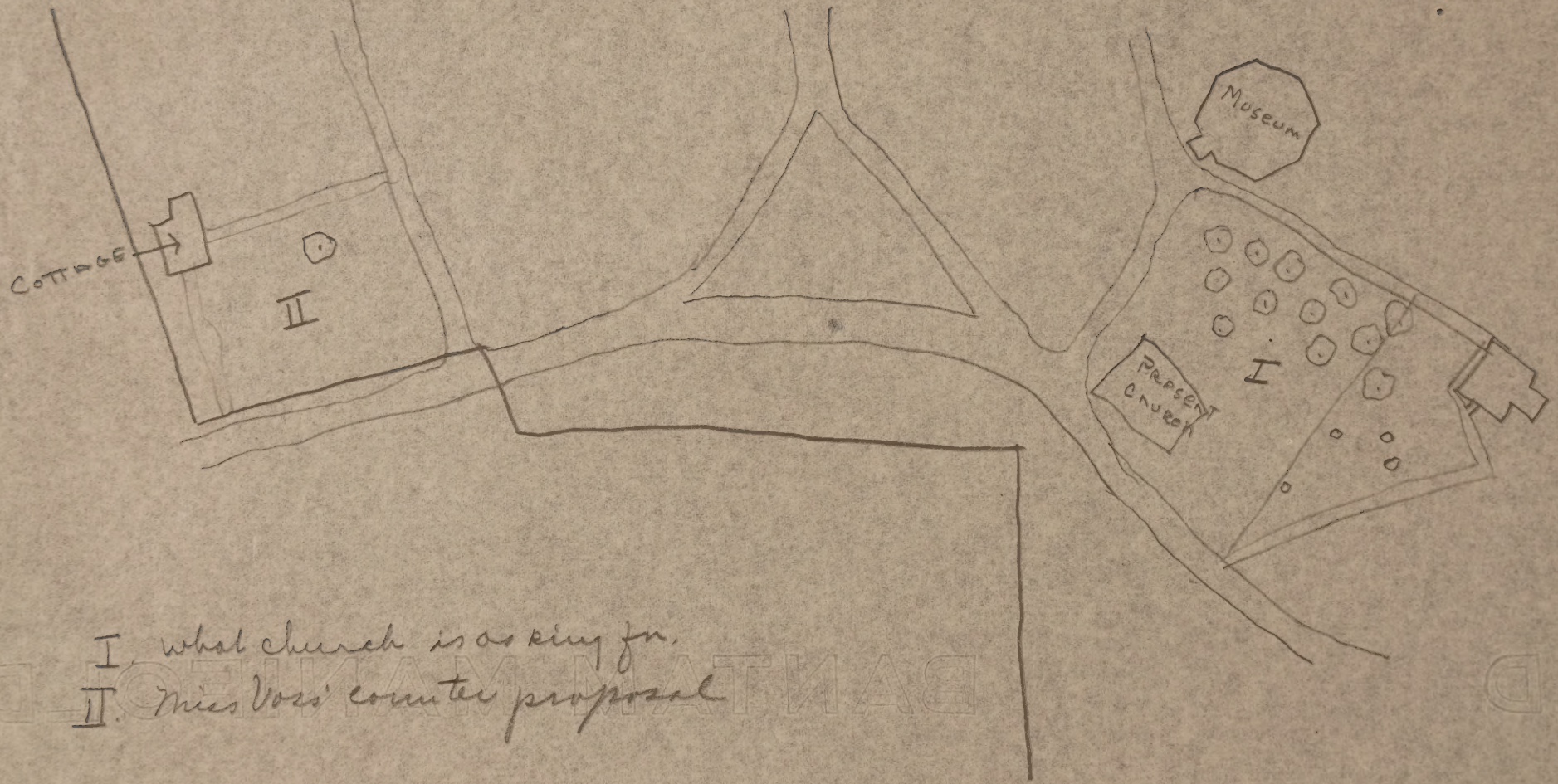
The plans have arrivedand I have spent some time studying them carefully. I am very muchly impressed with the whole scheme that has been developed. It is rather unique and certainly different, and it seems to me that the completed structure will offer a very serviceable building together with an attractive place of worship. I hope we can do something about the plans in the near future.

Cordially yours,

EBK:B

ALASKA

Sheldon Jackson School
Sitka, Alaska -



I. what Church is asking for.
II. Miss Voss' counter proposal

Board of National Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the
United States of America
156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

Sitka Church

June 17, 1941

MEMORANDUM TO Dr. King
FROM Miss Voss

With this I am returning Mr. Booth's letter and the sketch showing the amount of property for which the church is asking in the center of our Sheldon Jackson campus.

Referring to our conference of last week I am attaching a pencil sketch of the Sheldon Jackson campus showing the relationship in position and size of what the church is asking and what I am proposing we deed to them if I am forced to give up my contention that a campus church is not the wisest arrangement for a school and that the deeding of the property from the school to the church does not help matters, but may in fact be laying trouble for the future.

The plot I am suggesting as a compromise measure, but still with grave misgivings, is at least on the edge of our school property andnot in the center of the campus. It is a little smaller than what is being asked by the church, but frankly I think the plot asked for by the church is much larger than they need. The little cottage at the top of the hill of the proposed new plot could probably be moved to another location.

Again I ask that if possible consideration of a site outside of the campus at Sitka be made. For reasons I refer you to the long memorandum on this subject which I sent you before you took your last trip to Alaska.

Edna R. Voss

Edna R. Voss

ERV:J
Enc.